

25 September 2014

Joshua Grainger  
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Dear Mr Grainger

**Official Information Act 1982 request: Appointment of Kristy McDonald QC to provide report on Scott Watson's application to the Governor-General for the exercise of the Royal Prerogative of Mercy**

This letter responds to your request, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), for "...the information about the legal structure of the relationship between Kristy McDonald QC and the Ministry of Justice, not any specific details about her recruitment", received by the Ministry through the FYI.org.nz website on 28 August 2014.

I can advise that on 2 April 2009 Ms McDonald, in her role as a Queens Counsel, was instructed by the Ministry to provide a legal assessment of Mr Watson's application for the exercise of the Royal Prerogative of Mercy.

Ms McDonald was specifically instructed to provide legal advice on:

1. Whether there was any fresh evidence;
2. If there was, whether it might be sufficiently credible and cogent to raise a real doubt about the safety of Mr Watson's convictions; and
3. If the answer to 1 and 2 was yes, to advise on the steps Mr Watson would need to take to present his evidence in a form that could potentially support a referral of his convictions back to the Court of Appeal.

Yours sincerely



Tania Warburton  
Acting Chief Legal Counsel  
Office of Legal Counsel